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"TIMES - WEST VIRGINIA"

CCC-like camp seen as good idea for young people

Had a telephone chat with Fred Heston Tuesday, and he has the idea of putting many of this country's young people to work in a CCC-like camp.



JOHN
VEASEY

NOTEBOOK

Fred, who is very sharp of mind to go with his 90 years of age, was in the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1939 and 40.

He says this is an excellent way to teach young people how to work — that is if the government wishes to get involved in something like this again.

"I sure learned from it," he said. "I lied about my age to get in. ... You had to be 17 to get in. But I got in and was sent to Camp Pickens. I think it would be a good thing to get some of these young people working.

"I've written Sen. (Joe) Manchin about it, although I haven't heard anything from him."

Fred said when he was in, he was with a group that planted 300,000 trees — 50 in a bundle.

"We also did stream improvement during the summer," he continued. "I know it's a big subject, but it's a good way to clean up the land."

Fred likened his time in the CCC to being in the military.

"Many of the things we did were very similar to the military," he said. "I served a year. I learned a lot of skills."

He said the CCC boys worked all day, then came in and cleaned up their gear.

"At night they had classes that we could take," he said.

"I liked it. We learned a lot when we weren't fighting fires."

This apparently was how they spent much of their time — fighting fires.

He stressed that the U.S. government would have to get involved for the program to succeed.